Genealogy 101

By

Dale C. Maley

Livingston County Historical Society

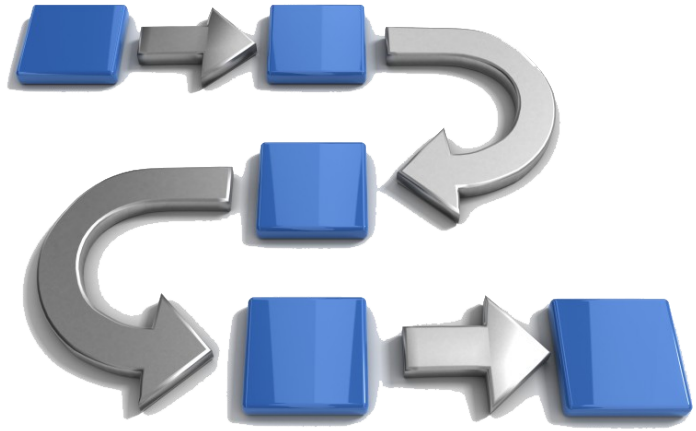
April 2018

Agenda

1. Genealogical Research is a Process
2. What the Web Can and Cannot Offer
3. Recommended Hardware & Software
4. Where to Begin
5. Other Information Sources
6. Documenting Your Family Tree
7. Research Check List
8. Q & A

Genealogical Research Process

1. Set Goals
2. Research
3. Saving the results in an organized fashion
   -save in home computer directories
4. Creating the Family Tree
   -Ancestry.com
   -other software
5. Sharing results with family members
   -paper scrapbook
   -Book(s) using Shutterfly
   -Thumb drive copies of all documents
   -printed and framed family trees



6. Saving information for posterity
   -family members get paper books and copies of computer files
   -upload images to Ancestry.com and/or FindAGrave.com
   -some libraries accept paper family Genealogy books (Dominy does)

Set Goals

1. Think about and write down the reasons you want to perform genealogical research…….

-I want to trace our family tree back to the source countries

-I want to discover and share our family history with current and future family generations

-I would like to confirm suspected American Indian ancestry in my family

What the Web CAN offer:

- Indexes and (some) vital statistics records
- Classified directories and collections of Web genealogical resources
- Personal family history pages posted by other researchers
- Genealogical discussion groups
- City, county and state genealogical or historical society pages
- Individual library websites with information about locations, schedules and holdings

What the Web CANNOT offer:

- Information about every family or ancestor—if no one has placed it online, it won't be there
- Accuracy or authenticity of the information found on any site—always look for documentation to support the information
- Original documents—although some items, like census records, can be viewed online and copied

Something to keep in mind during your research:

"Some family trees have beautiful leaves, and some have just a bunch of nuts. Remember, it is the nuts that make the tree worth shaking."

-Author Unknown

Recommended Hardware & Software

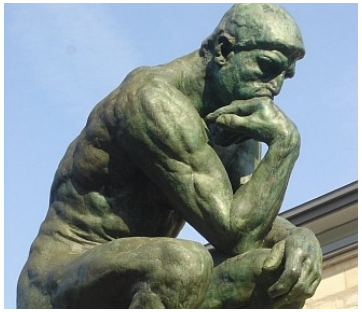
1. Home personal computer with Internet access
   -smart phone screens too small to understand images
   -Microsoft Word (to type up information)

2. Combination printer and scanner
   -scan in all paper images

3. Ancestry.com
   -$20 per month
   -easy access to many records
   -easy to create family tree
   -can download family tree file, discontinue $20/month, resume later

4. IrfanView
   -free program for handling images
   -easy to optimize images, crop images

Where to Begin?



1. Gather existing family information
   -scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, papers [scan them], Bibles
   -oral history from relatives, [type up using Word]
2. Create account in Ancestry.com
   -create your family tree
   -use “hints” to see if they match up with your family
   -use “search” to find info including Census and Military Records
   -use “search other members trees” at bottom of search list
3. Download Ancestry.com info files onto your home computer
   -family portraits
   -military draft cards or other info
   -text or word files
   -because you may want to use them when you publish your results

After you exhaust Ancestry.com

Other Information Sources

- Find-a-Grave.com
  -search to find where family members buried
  -often find a text bio with the grave site info

FIND A GRAVE

- Google Search
  -put name in quotes, e.g. “John Edward Bodley”
- Google Book Search
  -under Other search options
  -may find relative info in a book or trade magazine

Google Books

- 2 volume book set on Livingston County Cemeteries (not online)
  -by Mary Petersen Erickson (in Fairbuy Dominy library)
- Can search Fairbury cemeteries using Dominy Library web site
- Can search Fairbury cemeteries using Prairie Central Geography Class site

Other Information Sources - Continued

- Fairbury Blade
  -was digitized for $10,000 in 2016
  -free access from Dominy Library web site

- Pantagraph archives
  -$60 per year subscription

- Chicago Tribune archives
  -$0 (but not many stories on Livingston County)

- Pontiac Daily Leader
  -Not digitized except 1970's in Ancestry (very difficult to use)
  -Pontiac library history room has 3x5 index card by name, give year and page
  -new microfilm viewer, but I could not get it to work last time I tried
  -would be great if Pontiac Library got the Daily Leader digitized ☺

Other Information Sources - Continued

- (3) Livingston County History books
  -1878, 1888, 1909 Vol II
  -all 3 available as searchable PDF files
  -Fairbury Museum sells 3 CD's for $5 each
  -hard to find on Internet, takes long time to download

- GenealogyBank.com
  -$70 annual subscription
  -has a lot of nationwide newspapers

GENEALOGYBANK.COM

Other Information Sources - Continued

www.familysearch.org

- Access to records from around the world
- Excellent for European research
- A non-profit service sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Free Registration is offered for this site; not required to register to search the site
- Allows you to add your family tree to the site

Other Information Sources - Continued

www.usgenweb.com

- Volunteer-maintained, free site for genealogy
- Site was based on a prototype for Kentucky, so lots of KY information available
- Offers valuable information that commercial sites like Ancestry will not have, such as family photographs and headstone transcriptions
- “Researchers” page offers a wealth of helpful hints

Other Information Sources - Continued

www.castlegarden.org

- New York Passenger Lists from 1820-1913
- Free access to a database of information on 10 million immigrants. Over 73 million Americans can trace their ancestors to this early immigration period

Other Information Sources - Continued

www.ellisisland.org

- Immigrant passenger lists from post-1892 to 1924
- Excellent source for “new immigrant” research (Poles, Italians, Eastern Europeans)
- Website requires registration, but searching is free
- Make sure to perform your searches on Castle Garden as well and then compare the results—they could be different!

Other Information Sources - Continued

www.cyndislist.com

- A “card catalog” to the genealogical resources on the Internet
- A pathfinder that will point you in the direction of sites for topics that you need
- Lots of information divided into smaller, more specific categories for easier and more effective research

Other Information Sources - Continued

Genealogy Software

- Family Tree Maker is one of the most popular genealogy software programs
- May be purchased via the website www.genealogy.com
- There is a free web version of the software on this website, but it is limited
- www.genealogy.com will also allow you to post your trees
- Some free resources on this site and some by subscription

Other Information Sources - Continued

- Livingston County Death Certificates
  -not required by State law until 1916
  -you can check the book in the Old Court House to see if available before 1916

- U.S. Patent Office
  -do Google Search for “Google patent Search”, gives patent search option
  -do Google patent search by inventor name first, maybe city
  -can download PDF file of patent from Google
  -once you find patent number, can also go to USPTO.gov to save or print the pages

Other Information Sources - Continued

- **Old slides**

-extremely time consuming to digitize yourself
-all slides have dirt on them that show as specks
-recommend hiring a company to digitize them
-companies can afford expensive equipment to automatically fix slides
-many companies send you a new external hard drive with the files in 3 levels of resolution
-can use slide digital images in your family tree or scrapbook
-give copies of digital files to family members on USB thumb drives

Other Information Sources - Continued

- **Paper Picture Digital Repair**

  -companies can digitally repair old photographs
  -including photos with pieces that have fallen apart!
  -can remove “measles” from colored paper images from aging
  -JMC Photo in Bloomington has done excellent work for me
  (by Bloomington airport)

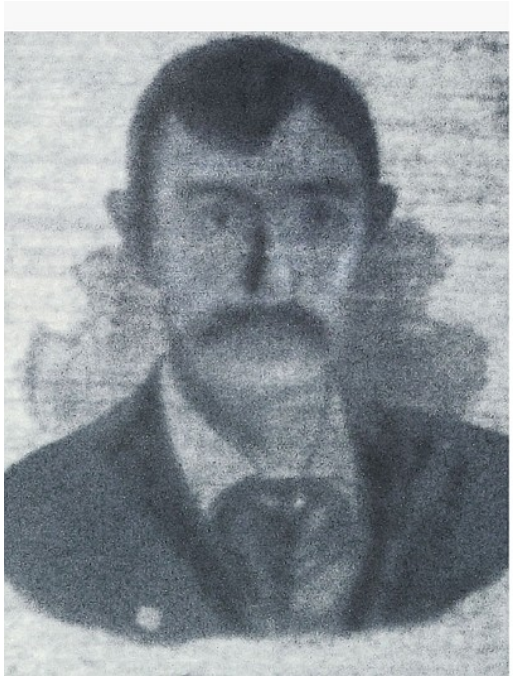
Measles – Circa 1900

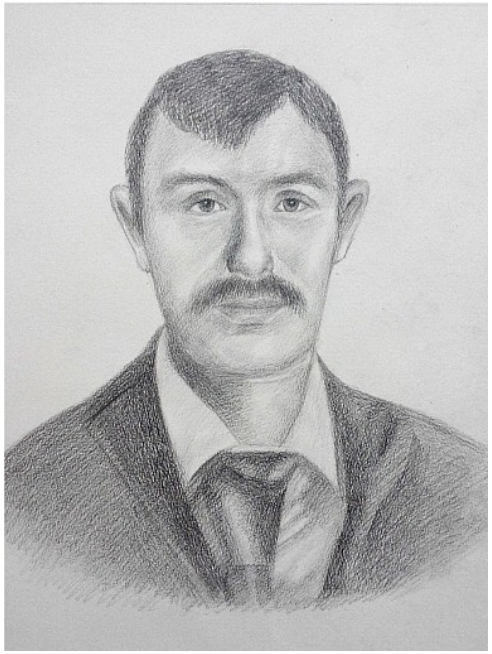
Repaired by JMC

Other Information Sources - Continued

- **Artist's Rendition of Poor Quality Photograph**

  -old newspaper images are often of very poor quality
  -if photo can not be repaired, another option is to hire an artist to re-create the image. PaintYourLife.com
  -1899 image of Fred Baird – Fairbury City Marshal killed in line-of-duty





Other Information Sources - Continued

- Searching in other countries

-Ireland is extremely difficult

-use paper census records as wood pulp in WWI

-Ancestry.com international version not much help, costs extra

-must know County name and parish

-can be many different spellings for the same name

-Michael Walsh at MyIrishConnections.com is reputable genealogist

-England, Germany

-Ancestry.com international version can be helpful

Other Information Sources - Continued

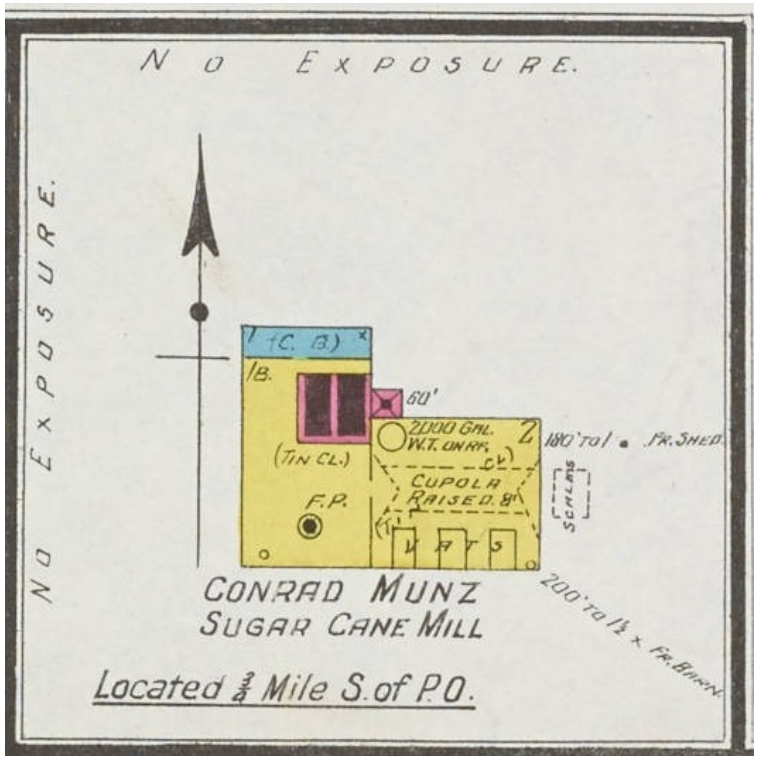
- Ancestry.com issues
  -many errors made by users
  -take all hints with a grain of salt

  -$20/month or $240 per year is expensive to maintain

  -I have 129 family trees on Ancestry.com
  -Fairbury history research
  -use results to write Fairbury history books
  -answer questions from people on Fairbury history Facebook page
  -"You know you are a history nut when you have over 100 family trees on Ancestry.com" ☺

Other Information Sources - Continued

- Sanborn Insurance Maps
  -made for many small towns
  -Fairbury has (5) different years from 1885 – 1911
  -may exist for other Livingston County towns



1911

Other Information Sources - Continued

- The Fort at Lexington
  -People there very helpful

Documenting Family Tree

- Ancestry.com very easy to use
  -can take screen shot images and use them in scrap books
  -Ancestry does offer some print options

- Shutterfly.com
  -Can make a book(s) of your family history
  -use images you found
  -include text you found
  -cost is $50 to $70 per book (usually sales around Christmas time)
  -make great Christmas gifts for family members
  -include USB thumb drive with all files used

- Make your own paper scrapbooks

Computers & the Internet

- Genealogy research really tough to do before computers
- Computers and the Internet make it 100X easier to research
- Can search 6,000+ pages of the 1878, 1888, and 1909 Livingston County History books in less than 10 minutes!

U.S. Census Records

- About a 70 year wait until they go public
  -latest available is 1940

- Some years records were destroyed by fire
  -St. Louis military records destroyed also

Old Photographs with no Names ☹

- If you know someone getting older, help them sort through old photos and label them

  -my mother-in-law is 93
  - -she sorted boxes with her daughter and labeled them
  - -she was oldest survivor of her siblings
  - -if she did not know the names, she threw them away

- Might be able to figure out who they are from Studio Name/City
  -E.g. Storm City, Iowa

Research Checklist

- ✓Gather Existing Information
- ✓Ancestry.com
- ✓FindaGrave.com
- ✓Dominy Library Fairbury Cemeteries
- ✓Prairie-Central Geography Class Cemetery directory
- ✓Book(s) with Livingston County Cemeteries (not online)
- ✓3 Livingston Co. History Books, 1878, 1888,1909
- ✓Google Search
- ✓Google Book Search
- ✓Google Patent Search, then USPTO.gov
- ✓Death certificates or marriage from old Liv. Co. Court House
- ✓Fairbury Blade online archives from Dominy Library site (free)
- ✓Pantagraph Archives (paid)
- ✓Chicago Tribune Archives (free)
- ✓Daily Leader microfilm
- ✓Fairbury High School year books
- ✓GenealogyBank.com (paid)
- ✓Cemetery visits & photos
- ✓Library visits
- ✓Sanborn Insurance Maps
- ✓Stuffed Clubs & Antimacassars
- ✓Other web sites listed above in presentation

Congratulations!

You've completed

"Genealogy 101"

Good luck in your research!